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【South Vietnam: Reports from all four corps areas of South Vietnam indicate that the Communists are prepared to launch attacks in conjunction with the Tet (17 February) holiday period.

Enemy-initiated military activity was generally light and scattered on 11-12 February. An enemy force, however, launched an unsuccessful attack on a major bridge on Route 4 some eight miles southwest of Saigon on 11 February. This is the type of attack which would normally set the stage for any larger attacks in the area.

The Communists have also been making extensive preparations to stir up popular antigovernment demonstrations in urban areas in connection with their military actions. These preparations have become fairly widespread in the last two months, especially in villages close to district and provincial capitals.

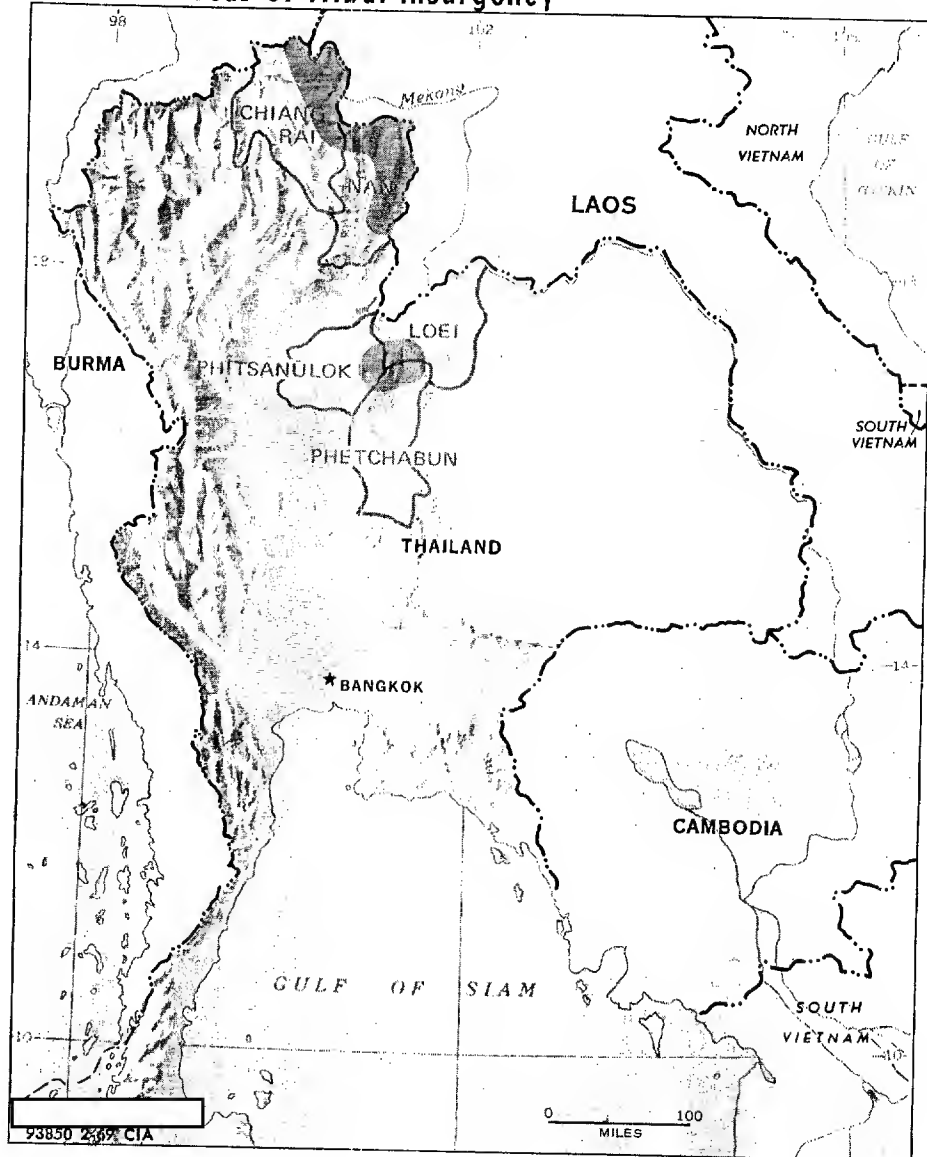
In addition, the enemy has been placing heavy emphasis on infiltrating specially trained sapper units into major urban centers, including Saigon. The Communist leadership has been aware for many months that one of the major shortcomings in the Tet 1968 offensive was the lack of adequate support for the main force units from within the urban centers. (Map) 】

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Thailand: Areas of Tribal Insurgency



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Thailand: Insurgents are strengthening their hold in isolated areas of the north as government security efforts continue to falter.

Government troops in the Phetchabun-Phitsanulok-Loei triborder area have been unable to drive Communist-led tribal guerrillas from fortified positions and have now virtually given up patrolling. The insurgents have been inflicting heavy casualties on government troops, who are dependent on helicopters for support and are unfamiliar with the rugged terrain.

In addition, the insurgents are making further efforts to destroy the government's badly disrupted tribal development program. They recently attacked civilian development teams for the first time and conducted sporadic raids on heretofore secure main roads.

Farther north, in Nan and Chiang Rai provinces where armed insurgent activity is entering its third year, there is increasing evidence that the Communists are attempting to extend their influence into adjacent lowland areas. The recent capture of a group of ethnic Thai insurgents suggests that the Communists are making some headway in recruiting lowland villagers.

In the face of these developments, the army has decided to concentrate its activities in the lowlands. Citing the heavy expense of maintaining troops in the field, as well as a desire to re-establish a "reserve" force, the 3rd Army has withdrawn a third of the troops committed to the security operation in Nan and Chiang Rai and has deactivated its forward operations headquarters there. Although the step may prove ultimately beneficial, the immediate effect will be to improve the insurgents' chances of building a secure base area.

 (Map)

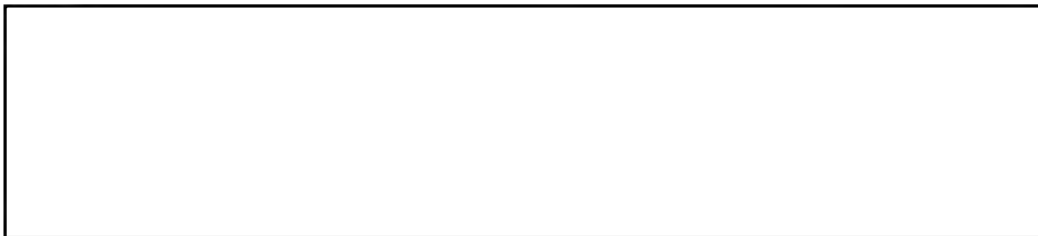
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Lebanon: The government fears that Palestinian commando activities in Lebanon are getting out of hand again and is trying to find ways to control them.

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President Hilu will soon send special representatives to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya to urge these governments to use their influence with the Palestinian organizations to curtail their activities in Lebanon. He has asked for parallel US appeals to the three countries, which provide these organizations with most of their financial support.

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A number of related moves have been taken, [redacted] Lebanese authorities have decided to inform the commando groups that they may no longer enlist new volunteers in Lebanon, and a Lebanese Army delegation has asked Syrian security officials to stop the infiltration of fedayeen from Syria into Lebanon.

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Lebanon's approaches to its sister Arab countries have little prospect of success. Syria especially is unlikely to take any action that would benefit the Lebanese Government. The emotions inspired by the Palestine liberation movement in the Arab world are such that Arab governments will be unwilling to risk an anti-fedayeen move. [redacted]

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Pakistan: Opposition leaders are preparing for a nationwide strike tomorrow which could bring new violence. They have still not responded to President Ayub's proposal for talks on 17 February.

The strike, scheduled several weeks ago by the new opposition coalition, is expected to receive widespread support from opposition parties, students, and some labor leaders. An impressive turnout would place the opposition in an advantageous position for negotiations with the government. Although strike leaders are urging that demonstrations remain peaceful, tensions throughout the country may result in renewed outbreaks of violence.

In an effort to improve the climate for a dialogue and encourage acceptance of his offer, the President has recently released a number of political prisoners and promised to lift the three-year-old state of emergency authorizing extraordinary governmental powers. Despite these conciliatory gestures, opposition leaders remain pessimistic about discussions with the government. Their delay in responding also indicates that the parties are having trouble ironing out differences over the conditions they should set for talks and over who should participate.

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Nigeria: Federal leaders are convinced that they must win a quick military victory over Biafra.

This sense of urgency over the military situation is reflected in the current attempt to organize still another "final offensive." This offensive has yet to get off the ground and in any event is unlikely to lead to an early victory.

Dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war is growing among top-level civil servants. They reportedly feel Gowon has not adequately consulted them and that he has not been sufficiently forceful in handling responsible military leaders. There almost certainly is dissatisfaction with Gowon among hawkish northern military officers, while both civil servants and military officers are increasingly concerned about widespread restiveness and war-weariness among Western Yoruba tribesmen.

The possibility of a sudden move against Gowon would seem to be increasing, although there is no available evidence of actual coup plotting at this time. Should a coup materialize, it would most likely come from army officers who feel they could win the war faster.

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Hungary-USSR: Hungarian party boss Kadar has tried to dispel rumors about his trip to Moscow last week.

Speculation arose because Kadar originally had been scheduled to receive Yugoslavia's Premier Spiljak in Budapest. This visit, which actually took place while Kadar was in Moscow, was considered by many offensive to the Soviets in light of Moscow's current relations with Belgrade. In a radio and television interview on 11 February, Kadar assured his audience that there were no bilateral problems with the USSR, suggesting that Spiljak's visit had not caused difficulties with Moscow.

Kadar went on to say that the major part of his talks was devoted to those questions which "currently preoccupy" the Soviets: the "timely development of the Warsaw Pact organization," economic cooperation in CEMA, and the possibilities of achieving unity in the Communist movement.

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Central America: Central American unity continues to be strained by Nicaragua's insistence on rapid progress toward economic integration.

The latest difficulty in the Central American Common Market stems from the Costa Rican Government's inability to push the San Jose Protocol through the legislature. The government failed to win passage on 10 February, and its next opportunity will not arise until Congress reconvenes on 10 March. If, as is likely, Costa Rica is unable to ratify the protocol, Nicaragua is expected to erect barriers against imports from Costa Rica and possibly other countries that fail to implement the agreement. Nicaraguan sanctions may also be directed against certain import items covered under other protocols. This would invite retaliation and threaten the gains already made toward integration.

Nicaragua attempted to exert pressure on its Common Market partners when the foreign ministers of the Organization of Central American States met on 31 January. Nicaragua's refusal to support the Honduran candidate for secretary general unless Honduras supported the immediate creation of a tribunal to settle integration disputes caused the meeting to recess until 17 February. A further postponement is likely, following an unproductive meeting of the Common Market ministers of economy on 8 February, which Nicaragua boycotted. [REDACTED]

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NOTE

Bolivia: Armed forces commander General Ovando plans to contact members of the new Soviet mission in Lima during his current visit to Peru. According to a Bolivian Government official, Ovando is probably following up President Barrientos' oft-expressed desire for expanded relations with the Communist countries and for development financing from the USSR. [In his news conference on 11 February, however, Barrientos expressed reserve about future commercial dealings with Communist countries.]

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